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Statistical Commission
Thirty-third session
5-8 March 2002
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional agenda and annotations

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9. Report of the Commission on its thirty-third session.

Annotations

1. Election of officers

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure and past practice, the Statistical Commission should elect, at its first meeting, a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur to serve from the beginning of the thirty-third session of the Commission to the beginning of the thirty-fourth session.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The items on the provisional agenda and the corresponding documentation were proposed by the Commission at its thirty-second session (New York, 6-9 March 2001)[1] and approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2001/230. Some changes have been made, in consultation with the officers of the Commission. A proposed organization of work is before the Commission. The Commission may wish to adopt the agenda and organization of work for the session.

Documentation

Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.3/2002/1)

Note by the Secretary-General on the organization of the work of the session (E/CN.3/2002/L.1)

Note by the Secretary-General on the state of preparation of documentation for the session (E/CN.3/2002/L.2)

3. Demographic and social statistics

(a) Population and housing censuses

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the proposed plans of the United Nations Statistics Division for the next census decade (2005-2014). The Commission may wish to review the emerging issues in population and housing censuses under the following five headings: (a) adapting census activities to appropriate and emerging technologies; (b) improving census management; (c) maximizing the coordinated use of data from censuses, inter-censal household surveys and administrative records; (d) developing and maintaining census mapping and geographic information systems; and (e) implementing dissemination programmes that maximize the use of census results by concerned stakeholders. The Commission may also wish to comment on the proposed plans of the Division for the decade

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the review of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the proposed plans of the United Nations Statistics Division for the next census decade (2005-2014) (E/CN.3/2002/2)

(b) Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

The Commission will have before it the report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation on its recent meetings and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/3)

(c) Health statistics

The Commission has requested a report by the World Health Organization on its activities and plans in the area of health statistics; the Commission may wish to express its views on those activities and plans.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Health Organization on its activities and plans in the area of health statistics (E/CN.3/2002/4)

(d) Rio Group on Poverty Statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics on its recent meetings and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/5)

(e) Siena Group for Social Statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Siena Group for Social Statistics on its recent meetings and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/6)

(f) Washington Group on Disability Measurement

The Commission will have before it the report of the Washington Group on Disability Measurement on its objectives and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the objectives and work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/7)

4. Economic statistics

(a) National accounts

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on National Accounts (Convener: Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA)). With respect to the updating of the *System of National Accounts, 1993* (1993 SNA),[2] the report will provide information on the latest recommendations regarding the treatment of mobile phone licences in national accounts, as well as on other topics currently under discussion. Also, a proposal for the creation of a consultative/advisory group to provide technical advice to ISWGNA will be included. For the conceptual assessment of the implementation of the 1993 SNA, a revised version of the conceptual compliance questionnaire will be presented to the Commission; regarding the assessment of quality issues, the report will elaborate to what extent the data quality assessment framework developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can be used for the assessment. Regarding the review of the treatment of intangible assets recommended by the Commission at its thirty-second session,[3] the report will include a proposal by ISWGNA to request the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics to carry out that research. As in previous reports, ISWGNA will also provide an integrated presentation of the work programmes of the members of ISWGNA in support of implementation of the 1993 SNA. Under points for discussion, the Commission may wish to express its views on (a) the creation of the consultative/advisory group to ISWGNA; (b) the proposal to request the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics to undertake the research on intangible assets; and (c) the proposals made for strengthening the work of the electronic discussion groups to promote research and discussion of SNA conceptual issues.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on National Accounts (E/CN.3/2002/8)

(b) Round Table on Business Survey Frames

The Commission will have before it the report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames on its recent meetings, completed activities, other outputs and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Round Table.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Round Table (E/CN.3/2002/9)

(c) Government finance statistics

The Commission will have before it a report prepared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the relationship between government finance statistics and the 1993 SNA. The report will also describe methods of implementing the *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001*.[4] The Commission may wish to comment on the relationship described and the methods outlined for implementing the *Manual*.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Monetary Fund on the relationship between government finance statistics and the *System of National Accounts, 1993* and on methods of implementing the *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001* of the International Monetary Fund (E/CN.3/2002/10)

(d) International Comparison Programme

The Commission will have before it the report of the World Bank on the development of a comprehensive project plan for the implementation of the International Comparison Programme at the global level. The Commission may wish to review the plan and provide guidance for future work.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on plans for the global International Comparison Programme (E/CN.3/2002/11)

(e) Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

The Commission will have before it the report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes on its recent meetings, completed activities, other outputs and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/12)

(f) Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics on progress in its work on the manuals on consumer price indexes and producer price indexes, including recent meetings and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Working Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Working Group (E/CN.3/2002/13)

(g) Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics on its recent meetings, completed activities, other outputs and proposed future work programme. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group and comment on the recommendations made at the fifth meeting of the Group as contained in its report.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/14)

(h) Voorburg Group on Service Statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. The report will summarize the work accomplished by the Group in its previous three-year work programme, during which the Group concentrated on work on producer price indexes, information society statistics, and the classification of service products and activities. The report will also outline its proposed work programme for the next three-year period. The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Group.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group (E/CN.3/2002/15)

5. Natural resources and environment statistics

With the convening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002 and the submission of the revised Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting[5] (SEEA-2000), the year 2002 marks a milestone for the United Nations Statistics Division in the areas of environment statistics and environmental accounting. The report will summarize recent developments and the current status of work in both areas. It will outline a proposal for a work programme that focuses on methodological work, training and implementation with a view to facilitating regular data production in countries and improving the availability and quality of environmental data. The Commission may wish to consider: (a) whether it agrees with the conclusions drawn in the report; (b) the proposed work programme of the Division in the areas of environment statistics and accounting.

The Commission will also have before it the report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting. The report will summarize progress on the final draft of SEEA-2000. The Commission may wish to approve the final draft of SEEA-2000.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics and environmental accounting (E/CN.3/2002/16)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting (E/CN.3/2002/17)

Draft revised Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/61/Rev.1)

6. Statistical capacity-building

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General, which will describe elements of statistical capacity at the national level and consider the necessary conditions to build such capacity. It will also consider what role technical cooperation by the international community can play in supporting the build-up of national statistical capacity, and will contain a brief description of the current programme of technical cooperation of the United Nations Statistics Division. The Commission may wish to discuss the report and comment on the technical cooperation programme of the Division.

The Commission will also have before it a progress report on the work of the PARIS 21 Consortium, including its programme of subregional workshops and country follow-ups, decisions on the structure, financing and location of PARIS 21, the work programme for 2002 and 2003 to broaden and deepen the work of the Consortium, and the evaluation of its achievements that has been proposed for 2003. The Commission may wish to consider (a) its involvement in the work of PARIS 21 and (b) tailoring the work programme of PARIS 21 to meet the call of the Economic and Social Council for more attention to statistical capacity-building and better coordination between agencies.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/2002/18)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a progress report on the work of the PARIS 21 Consortium on strengthening cooperation for statistical capacity-building (E/CN.3/2002/19)

7. Activities not classified by field

(a) International economic and social classifications

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the work programme on international economic and social classifications, as endorsed by the Commission at its thirtieth session.[6] Annex I of the report will contain the recommendations and conclusions of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications in its capacity as the central coordinating body for implementing the proposed work programme. The report will include the

recommendations of the Expert Group for the work programme and the time frame for the planned revisions of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3[7] (ISIC, Rev.3) and the Central Product Classification, Version 1.0[8] (CPC, Version 1.0) in 2007, including information on the updates to ISIC, Rev.3 and CPC, Version 1.0 that will be available to the Commission for information as ISIC, Rev.3.1 and CPC, Version 1.1, respectively.

The Commission will also have before it a report on a project to study convergence between the Activity Classification of the European Communities (NACE) and the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). That project is currently a process involving the statistical agencies of Europe and North America. Due to its importance and the general desire to reach convergence between the major industrial classification systems, the process is providing important input into the revision process for ISIC. To reach the goal of convergence by 2007, both the relationship of the revision of ISIC and the work on convergence need to be clarified, and coordination carried out.

The Commission may wish to:

(a) Comment on the proposed time frame for the revisions of ISIC and CPC in 2007,

(b) Comment on the convergence project for NACE and NAICS and discuss how that process and the ISIC revision process can be best coordinated.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/2002/20)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of Statistics Canada, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática of Mexico, the United States Bureau of the Census and the Statistical Office of the European Communities on the convergence of industrial classifications (E/CN.3/2002/21)

(b) The Special Data Dissemination Standard and the General Data Dissemination System

The Commission will have before it the report of IMF on recent developments in the Special Data Dissemination Standard and the General Data Dissemination System, including their role in the transparency initiatives of IMF and underlying work on data quality. The Commission may wish to express its views on those developments.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Monetary Fund (E/CN.3/2002/22)

(c) Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata: the Task Force on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative

The Commission will have before it a report presenting an overview of extensible mark-up language (XML) as an emerging standard for statistical data exchange. The Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, IMF, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Statistics Division have formed the

Task Force on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange to explore common standards for the collection and sharing of electronic data and metadata. The report will focus on using XML with existing data exchange protocols, such as the Generic Statistical Messages for Central Banks, and existing dissemination formats, such as the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board. The Commission may wish to comment on the report.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report entitled "Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata: the Task Force on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative" (E/CN.3/2002/23)

(d) Definition and measurement of e-commerce

Statistics of e-commerce has been given considerable attention at the national and international levels in recent years. This agenda item is intended to give to members of the Commission and all national statistical offices an indication of how some countries are approaching the definition and measurement of e-commerce, based on reports of national experience from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Canada, the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística of Colombia, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and the Department of Statistics of Singapore.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Canada, the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística of Colombia, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and the Department of Statistics of Singapore on their work to develop the statistics of e-commerce (E/CN.3/2002/24)

(e) Coordination of development indicators

The Commission will have before it a report by the Secretary-General on the harmonization of development indicators. The report will describe the work of the United Nations Statistics Division in support of the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 on basic indicators in the context of the follow-up to global conferences. In particular, the report will focus on the statistical implications of the United Nations Millennium Declaration[9] follow-up process. In that context, a background document linked to the report will contain an analysis of so-called "indicators of a global partnership for development".

The Commission will also have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission entitled "An assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings". The Friends of the Chair conducted an in-depth technical analysis of about 300 conference indicators, responding to an explicit request by the Statistical Commission[10] and in an effort to provide leadership in the field of conference indicators. In response to the request for a limited list of indicators,[11] the report will propose an indicator framework containing three priority tiers. The report will also contain detailed recommendations for future work, in particular on how to maintain the indicator framework. It will also recommend a mechanism of statistical review for future proposed indicators. The Commission may wish to endorse the

technical findings contained in the report and recommend that the report be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of development indicators (E/CN.3/2002/25)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission entitled "An assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings" (E/CN.3/2002/26)

(f) Meeting the needs for statistics of human development

At the thirty-second session of the Commission, in response to the report of the Friends of the Chair (see E/CN.3/2001/18), the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) proposed to submit a paper to the Commission at its thirty-third session;[12] that report will be before the Commission. The report will discuss the various urgent data needs that the Office, as a user of statistics, faces in assessing global trends of human development. In particular, it will address the lack of data in specific areas, the gaps in international data series, the discrepancies between national and international data series and the discrepancies between international data series. It will also brief the Commission on the implementation of the recommendation contained in the report of the Friends of the Chair in support of the Office's continuing effort to improve the quality of the statistical content of the *Human Development Report*.[13]

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme on meeting the needs for statistics of human development (E/CN.3/2002/27)

(g) Handbook of Statistical Organization

The Commission will receive an oral report from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division describing the final phases of the work on completion of the *Handbook of Statistical Organization*,[14] uses that have already been made of the draft *Handbook* and immediate planned future uses. The final text of the *Handbook* is expected to have been submitted for official editing by the opening of the current session of the Commission.

(h) Dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistics Division

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General, which will set out the basis and scope of United Nations publication and dissemination policies; explain their interpretation and application to the statistical publications prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division; and review the dissemination practice and experience of the Division with respect to printed compilations, electronic publications and dissemination on the Internet. The report will note that dissemination policy for United Nations materials on the Internet is still at an early stage of development, as is the Internet as a dissemination medium. However, notwithstanding the high demand for statistics on the Internet, it does not appear

likely that established policies of maximum cost recovery and copyright protection can be long maintained. The implications of that shift for the availability of statistics, statistics-based revenues, archivability for long-term access, and the balance of national and international data sources are still far from clear. Commission members may wish to comment on experience and plans in their countries and organizations with respect to new dissemination policies and cost recovery, among other issues, and to suggest directions for the future dissemination of international statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(i) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions

This item was placed on the agenda by the Commission at the request of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/55. The aims are to encourage a closer relationship between the work of the Commission and that of the Economic and Social Council, and to promote harmonization of the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission will have before it a note by the Secretary-General containing extracts from Economic and Social Council resolutions, decisions and agreed conclusions that are relevant to the work of the Commission and the actions taken or planned by the Commission. The Commission may wish to decide upon any action that may be necessary.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2002/L.5)

(j) Coordination and integration of statistical programmes

The report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fifth session (Vienna, 18-20 September 2001) will be before the Commission. The Commission may wish to take into account, in its discussion under relevant agenda items, the views expressed by the Subcommittee at that session.

At the request of the Commission at its thirty-second session,[1] the United Nations Statistics Division sent an inquiry to national statistical offices asking them to provide any specific examples that they had encountered of duplication of requests for statistical data by international organizations. The Division sent the inquiry to the 53 countries that attended the thirty-second session of the Commission. Eleven countries replied. The replies were considered by the Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session. Lead organizations were appointed by the Subcommittee to examine each instance in which a country had reported duplication. The Commission will have before it a report summarizing the outcomes of the study and proposed actions by the international organizations.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-fifth session (E/CN.3/2002/29)

Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data collection from countries (E/CN.3/2002/30)

(k) Programme questions (United Nations Statistics Division)

The Commission will receive an oral report from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division concerning current work and plans and priorities, and will have before it the proposed list of expert group meetings and workshops to be held by the Division in 2002, for approval, and the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005, for review and comment.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General on planned expert groups and workshops (E/CN.3/2002/CRP.1)

Note by the Secretary-General containing proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005 (E/CN.3/2002/CRP.2)

8. Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-fourth session of the Commission

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the Commission will have before it the draft provisional agenda for its thirty-fourth session, together with an indication of the documents to be submitted under each item and the legislative authority for their preparation. The Commission will also have before it a proposal for the dates of the thirty-fourth session.

In addition, in accordance with requests of the Economic and Social Council (see Council resolution 1999/51), the Commission will have before it a draft multi-year programme of work for 2002-2005.

Also, in an effort to promote more harmonization and coordination in the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission will have before it a note summarizing the activities of the Commissions on Population and Development and on Sustainable Development that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission and indicating possible implications for the work of the Statistical Commission.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on the provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-fourth session of the Commission (E/CN.3/2002/L.3)

Note by the Secretary-General containing the draft multi-year programme of work for the Statistical Commission for 2002-2005 (E/CN.3/2002/L.4)

Note by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Commissions on Population and Development and on Sustainable Development and their possible implications for the work of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2002/L.6)

9. Report of the Commission on its thirty-third session

The Commission may wish to adopt the report on its thirty-third session, which will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

Documentation

Draft report of the Commission on its thirty-third session

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] Commission of the European Communities, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, United Nations and World Bank (Brussels/Luxembourg, New York, Paris and Washington, D.C., 1993).

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), para. 19 (f).

[4] Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund (forthcoming).

[5] Statistical Papers, Series F, No. 61 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XVII.12).

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), para. 108.

[7] Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 4, Revision 3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 90.XVII.11).

[8] Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 77 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 98.XVII.5).

[9] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[10] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), para. 45 (b).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., para. 52 (d).

[13] Published annually for UNDP by Oxford University Press, New York.

[14] Statistical Papers, Series F, No. 28, Revision 1 (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

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Statistical Commission
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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Demographic and social statistics: population and housing censuses

Review of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and proposed plans of the United Nations Statistics Division for the next census decade (2005-2014)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the Statistical Commission in accordance with a request of the Commission at its thirty-second session.** It reviews the important issues that arose during the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and proposes activities that could be undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division to enhance the successful implementation of the 2010 world population and housing census programme (2005-2014). Points for discussion by the Commission are contained in paragraphs 19 and 20.

* E/CN.3/2002/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

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I. Background

1. At its twenty-eighth session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme, including the production of necessary handbooks and training materials.[1] Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution, inter alia, urged member States to carry out population and housing censuses during the period 1995-2004, taking into account international and regional recommendations relating to population and housing censuses and giving attention to advance planning and timely dissemination of census results.

2. In response to the above-mentioned resolution, the United Nations Statistics Division revised the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, following consultations with countries, and produced three handbooks (see annex). Technical assistance in the form of international, regional and subregional training workshops and direct advice on various issues related to population and housing censuses in individual countries was undertaken under the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation, with the assistance of and additional funding from the United Nations Population Fund and from United Nations development account projects. International assistance to countries in census-taking is a long-term commitment, covering activities ranging from ascertaining country needs and developing technical materials to addressing emerging issues and providing technical assistance through training programmes at the national, regional and subregional levels.

3. A United Nations symposium on the theme "Global review of the 2000 round of population and housing censuses: mid-decade assessment and future prospects was held in New York from 7 to 10 August 2001. The purpose of the symposium was to identify issues and emerging problems from the current round of censuses (1995-2004) and seek solutions that would serve to guide census planning during the next round (2005-2014). The present report briefly reviews proposals made at the symposium (see sect. II), the work undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division during the 2000 census decade (see annex) and proposals for activities to be undertaken in the coming years (sect. III).

II. Critical issues

4. Emerging issues of particular significance to the successful implementation of census programmes that were identified and highlighted during the above-mentioned symposium include:

(a) Adapting census activities to appropriate and emerging technologies;

(b) Improving census management;

(c) Maximizing the coordinated use of data from censuses, inter-censal household surveys and administrative records;

(d) Developing and maintaining census mapping and geographic information systems (GIS);

(e) Implementing dissemination programmes that maximize the use of census results by concerned stakeholders.

Adapting census activities to appropriate and emerging technologies

5. Information technology is critical in census planning and management, mapping applications, data processing and data dissemination. However, countries sometimes find it difficult to choose appropriate technologies because of lack of trained staff and limited in-house expertise and restricted access to available technologies. As a result, countries may have adopted technologies that are not suitable for given conditions or are in the development phase and have not been properly documented. Moreover, within the country there may be no suitable support available to resolve operational problems and the frequent turnover of staff exacerbates the problem. In some instances, such problems have resulted in excessive delays in the processing and dissemination of census results.

6. In order to ameliorate such situations, countries that took part in the above-mentioned symposium recommended that there is a need to develop and widely circulate technical notes reviewing the adaptation of census operations to available technologies, indicating their advantages and disadvantages and the status of development. Furthermore, for countries to benefit from emerging technologies, it is important that national statistical offices have in-house or easily accessible expertise to select and monitor specific technologies. The expertise

is important for operational use and for monitoring outsourced activities.

Improving census management

7. Nearly all countries have conducted at least one census and have, therefore, accumulated local knowledge about its planning and undertaking. However, due to the wide time gap between censuses, lack of proper recording of experiences and personnel changes, many countries end up planning each census from scratch. Although the United Nations Handbook on Census Management for Population and Housing Censuses provides a comprehensive review of census management issues, including quality assurance and stakeholder involvement, it requires amplification of country experience. It does, however, provide countries with a detailed overview of steps and conditions necessary for conducting a successful census. It has been published in the six official languages of the United Nations.

8. Two important issues that were not treated in the *Handbook* concern the use and management of outside vendors in executing selected census activities and the need to establish a record of national census activities that succeeded and failed. Some census offices are not fully versed in developing and executing such arrangements due to lack of in-house expertise, and therefore find it difficult to monitor and ensure the quality of outputs from outsourced census activities. The absence of institutional memory and methodological reports prevents countries from benefiting from past experience and results in mistakes made during previous censuses being repeated, thus wasting time and resources.

Maximizing the coordinated use of data from censuses, inter-censal household surveys and administrative records

9. The major sources of demographic and social statistics are censuses, household surveys and administrative records. Nearly all countries collect most of their population data from those three sources, although with varying sophistication. Too often, little effort is made to link such data for demographic and social analysis or policy formulation. Better linkages would not only improve the usefulness of available statistics but would avoid duplication of data collection. Indeed, many countries collect a considerable amount of statistics, from different sources, which are rarely fully exploited.

10. A major constraint in fully exploiting data is the lack of coordination and expertise in respect of the agencies involved in each of the three data-collection activities and data users. With the increasing demand on statistical systems to provide timely, policy-relevant and high-quality data, it is important to strengthen the dialogue among data producers and users.

Developing and maintaining census mapping and Geographic Information Systems

11. Maps are one of the most important elements that determine the quality and coverage of a census. Historically, many countries have relied upon ad hoc arrangements to develop those maps. Most of the time, sketch maps of questionable quality are drawn just prior to census enumeration. As a result, the quality and future use of census information for sampling frames is greatly compromised. With the advancement in technology and wider availability of GIS in many countries, there is also a need to develop more permanent mechanisms for the maintenance of enumeration area-level maps. Such arrangements would not only encourage the maintenance of continuously updated maps but would also ensure the accuracy of the sampling frames, and in the long run would reduce future census/survey time and costs.

Implementing dissemination programmes that maximize the use of statistics by concerned stakeholders

12. Too often, countries collect a considerable volume of data, with limited and untimely dissemination. Thus, most of the data remain underutilized. The situation is complicated by the increasing demand for population and housing data in more detailed formats and for small areas. Statistical systems are also under pressure to produce and disseminate required data in a more timely and user-friendly manner. Conventionally, countries have produced a set of paper tabulations. The introduction of new technology and the electronic dissemination of data have raised many challenges and opportunities for statistical and census offices.

13. In many cases, little attention has been paid to census data dissemination strategies at the time of the planning of censuses, and a set of tables has been

produced that census organizations have felt were needed for the wide dissemination of results. Furthermore, problems associated with protecting confidentiality may lead to users being denied access to census data in raw or semi-processed files. Even in countries where users are encouraged to request special tabulations, the availability of requested information may be untimely and relatively costly. Census data, as a result, are not necessarily available for wider use to the extent of their full potential.

14. In recent decades, efforts have been made by census data producers to make census information widely available. The sophistication of data users has resulted in demands for more detailed, well documented, high-quality data at small geographic area levels, including meta data. Notwithstanding that change, however, due to the lack of awareness of available dissemination technologies and trained manpower some countries are finding it difficult to meet the increasing user expectations or demands.

III. Proposed activities of the United Nations Statistics Division for the 2005-2014 population and housing census decade

15. The United Nations Statistics Division anticipates a continuation of the training programmes undertaken in the past to plan and conduct censuses to strengthen national capabilities to undertake census operations. Those undertakings can help to build regional and subregional understanding about census methods, sharing of experience and self-reliance through the exchange of expertise. In recognizing emerging needs, there is a need to conduct targeted workshops, resources permitting, dealing with the issues raised above.

16. In addition, the Division plans, resources permitting, to prepare three handbooks and two technical reports as follows:

(a) A handbook on the collection of data on fertility and mortality in 2002;

(b) A technical report and guide for the collection of economic characteristics in population censuses in 2002;

(c) A handbook on household demographic and social surveys, to be completed by 2003;

(d) A technical report on census evaluation, to be completed in 2005;

(e) A handbook on dissemination, to be completed by 2006.

Each of the above-mentioned handbooks and technical reports would be developed in consultation with national statistical offices, through meetings and workshops, technical missions and correspondence. Upon the completion of each draft, a group of experts would conduct a technical review.

17. Technical advisory services are required to supplement the training workshops as countries begin to plan and implement the censuses of population and housing during the 2005-2014 census decade.

18. Meeting user needs through census products is a challenge to national offices and international organizations. The United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* collects and disseminates data from national population censuses on a variety of topics, such as fertility, mortality, migration, population composition, education, ethnicity, economic characteristics, disability and household characteristics. The *Yearbook* is an important monitoring and dissemination tool for assessing coverage and quality of census data. A review by the United Nations Statistics Division, currently under way, includes consideration of the contents of the *Yearbook* to ensure that it is effectively meeting user needs, methods used by countries to evaluate their census data, and the use of new technology in its preparation, publication and dissemination. The review will cover issues confronted by countries in disseminating data from population and housing censuses, and will serve as an avenue for presenting some of the dissemination and evaluation issues that countries confront.

IV. Points for discussion

19. The Commission may wish to comment on whether the issues raised in paragraphs 4 to 14 above are the correct ones.

20. The Commission may also wish to comment on the proposals contained in paragraphs 15 to 18 above and to:

(a) Indicate its agreement with the specific matters proposed;

(b) Note any additional activities required;

(c) Discard any proposals that may be not feasible or are not considered to be useful;

(d) Set priorities and indicate who might take on additional activities to strengthen national capacities.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8* (E/1995/28), chap. I, sect. A.

Annex

List of methodological materials

Methodological materials published by the United Nations Secretariat to assist countries in improving their population and housing censuses during the past five years are listed below.

Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1

Statistical Papers, Series: M, No. 67/Rev.1
Sales No. 98.XVII.8

Handbook on Census Management for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1

Statistical Papers, Series: F, No. 83/Rev.1
Sales No. 00.XVII.15/Rev.1

Handbook on Geographic Information Systems and Digital Mapping

Statistical Papers, Series: F, No. 79
Sales No. 00. XVII.12

Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing

Statistical Papers, Series: F, No. 82
Sales No. 00.XVII.9

Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 2

Statistical Papers, Series: M, No. 19/Rev. 2
Sales No. 01.XVII.10

Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1

Statistical Papers, Series: M, No. 58/Rev.1
Sales No. 98.XVII.14

United Nations E/CN.3/2002/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 December 2001

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Thirty-third session
5-8 March 2002
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Demographic and social statistics: Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

Report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation. The Commission may wish to comment on the work undertaken by the Group and offer advice on the direction for its future work.

* E/CN.3/2002/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

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Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

Purpose

To examine, assess and reconcile the various sources of information used to measure labour market conditions and compensation, particularly in the context of the deregulation of labour markets and structural unemployment, and to contribute to improving concepts and their implementation, as well as the construction of new indicators.

Year organized

1997

Participants

Current participants: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, Netherlands, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, International Labour Organization, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Meetings

Paris, 27 and 28 November 1997.

London, 6 and 7 July 1998.

Paris, 18 and 19 November 1999.

Örebro, Sweden, 20 and 21 September 2000.

Topics considered

1. Key labour market indicators; labour market dynamics; reconciliation of estimates of employment (and unemployment) from different sources; typologies of patterns of activities.

2. Hours worked: discussions on the various approaches to the measurement of annual working time and the uses of these measures (for national accounts, evaluation of productivity etc.).

3. Compensation: earnings distribution and analysis of employment-related income.

Products

"Statistics on labour market dynamics", paper presented at a meeting of the OECD Working Party on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, April 2001.

Scientific reports of the Paris meeting and the London meeting, both available from the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE) of France and on the Internet (see addresses below).

Internet site animation since January 1999 (INSEE, OECD) at: http://www.insee.fr/en/av_service/colloques/citygroup.htm (/fr/ instead of /en/ for French version).

Planned activities and expected future products

The Group is currently in the process of reorganizing itself; the topics that it will consider in the future have not yet been decided.

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